

Carlotta Learns About Her Medicine

A Story for Children with Inattention and Anxiety



Second Edition

Written by Matthew R. Galvin, M.D. Cover Illustrations by Sandy Laramore

Other Illustrations by _____

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The Editors
Conscience Works

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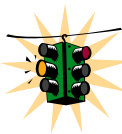
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Comments about the website to Sue London (slondon@iupui.edu)

Dear Reader:

As you read about Carlotta, you are invited to draw pictures and write down ideas that illustrate her story.

You will see this  * followed by "Dear Illustrator" and a suggestion from the **Conscience Works** editors. A space is provided in which you can make the illustration according to the suggestion.

Thank you for your help in making Carlotta's story even better. As an illustrator, be sure to give yourself credit by putting your name on the cover in the blank.

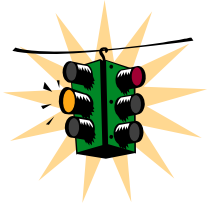
The Editors

*Clip art from Microsoft Word

In the land where cars grow up much as people do, Carlotta's older brother, Rodrigo, often traveled the road ahead and sometimes beside her. Rod liked questions. His favorite was "How soon can I get on the INTERSTATE?" That's where speeds were fastest in the land.

Like Rod, Carlotta went to roadster-school. In roadster-school, young cars went to a track to practice following directions. Sometimes there were several directions to keep in mind at once. Carlotta wanted to learn, but like Rod, she had real problems. Like Rod, she could not pay attention to her teacher. She wanted to ask, "*What did you say again, Mr. Jalopy?*" Like Rod, Carlotta struggled with homework.

But Rod brought his unfinished homework to school and honked until his teacher helped him. Carlotta never honked her horn in class. She was too worried the teacher would think badly of her. Each question went hand-in-hand with an "AFRAID-I-MIGHT," like: "I'm *afraid-I-might* get in trouble if I ask him to repeat what he said" or: "I'm *afraid-I-might* look silly to my classmates if I ask."



Dear Illustrator:

Perhaps you have some *afraid-I- might's* of your own.
Use the space below to draw the *afraid-I -might*
that bothers you most.

Instead of honking for help in the day, she stayed up at night. After many sleepless hours, Carlotta often did figure out the answers. But then she was so tired, she slept through her alarm. And in her hurry, she forgot her homework altogether. She had nothing to show Mr. Jalopy for all the work she'd done and could think of nothing to do except cry.

In the land of cars, there 's an old saying: "It's the squeaky wheel that gets oiled first." Rod was restless and drove without thinking. So others noticed him at a young age. Unlike her brother, Carlotta had trouble getting noticed much at all. When she was noticed, it was because she often seemed to daydream. Classmates teased and asked Carlotta, "On a road-trip in la-la-land having fun?" Carlotta thought, *"If la-la-land is where you worry so much about paying attention that you lose track, then it's not a very fun place to be."* She said nothing aloud.

Good thing for Carlotta sayings aren't always true. Because of Rod, Mrs. Vehicularo was alert to problems when Carlotta started school. So, there was a parent/teacher talk. Afterwards, Mom arranged for them to see Dr. Wheeler.

Dr. Wheeler introduced herself and invited them into her office. Once everyone was parked, Dr. Wheeler smiled and said, "Carlotta, your mom asked me to see you today to find out about your problems. To do that, I need to ask you personal questions. By 'personal' I mean your thoughts, your feelings, what's important to you, choices you make, and things you do. Before we start, I want you to know that I've seen your brother for some time. He told me it was O.K. to tell you. I would like to know if that makes you worried or uncomfortable."

After awhile, Carlotta said, "I don't think I want Rod to know what we talk about."

"O.K. I won't tell Rod things you don't want him to know."

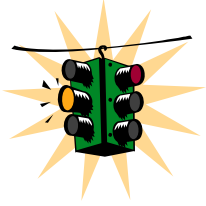
"There might be *some* things I want him to know."

" We can talk about those things before you tell him, if you like. But there are persons in your pit crew with whom I would like to be free to talk about your problems. "

Carlotta exclaimed, "Pit Crew? You mean like at a race where everyone is watching?"

" Don't you like running races while everyone watches?"

"Oh no. I don't want to be a racecar. But-" Carlotta stopped.



Dear Illustrator:

We will also stop here to give you time to draw a picture of what you would like to be or do when you are grown up.

"But what, Carlotta?" Dr. Wheeler had a friendly smile.

Carlotta sighed, "I would like to be able to drive myself to interesting places and take things to other persons who need them."

"Well, Carlotta, we aren't trying to win a race and won't be in anyone else's hurry. O.K.?"

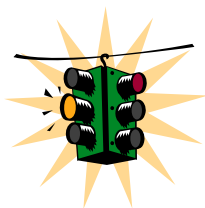
Carlotta nodded, "I don't mind a pit crew if I don't have to race."

Dr. Wheeler continued, "Two of the persons in your pit crew you already know - your mom and Mr. Jalopy. I may ask another special mechanic, Dr. Beemer, to check your engine, your oil, your tire pressure, and your headlights. Together we will try to help you."

After awhile, Dr. Wheeler said, "Carlotta, you have been very patient to answer so many questions. Thank-you. Now do you have any questions for me?"

Carlotta clutched. She couldn't think of any.

Dr. Wheeler said, "Its O.K. I'll bet you will think of some to ask next time."



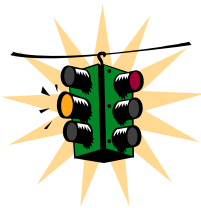
Dear Illustrator:

Write down (you can ask Mom or Dad to help you) questions that you think Carlotta might want to ask on her next visit to Dr. Wheeler.



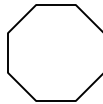
As Mom made dinner, Carlotta told Rod about her visit with Dr. Wheeler.

" On one test, I had to press the bar down whenever the computer flashed a Stop Sign followed by a Caution Sign, but it kept tricking me with false signals. I was frustrated. I--"



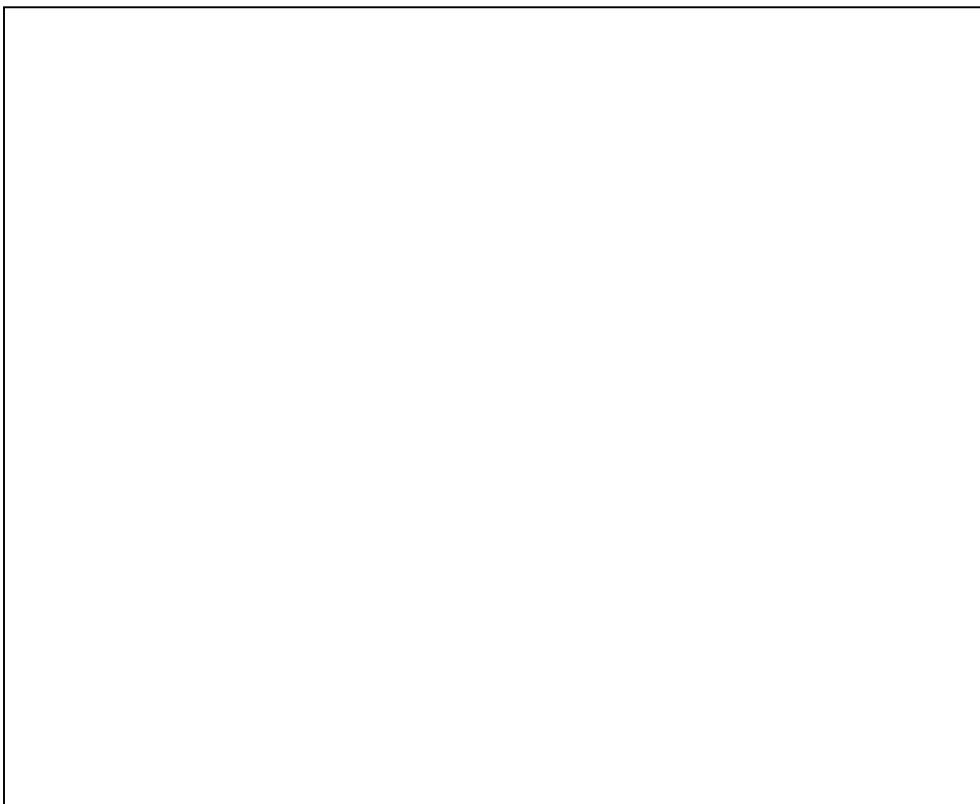
Dear Illustrator:

In the space below
copy this figure



But make it much bigger.

What letters should go inside it?

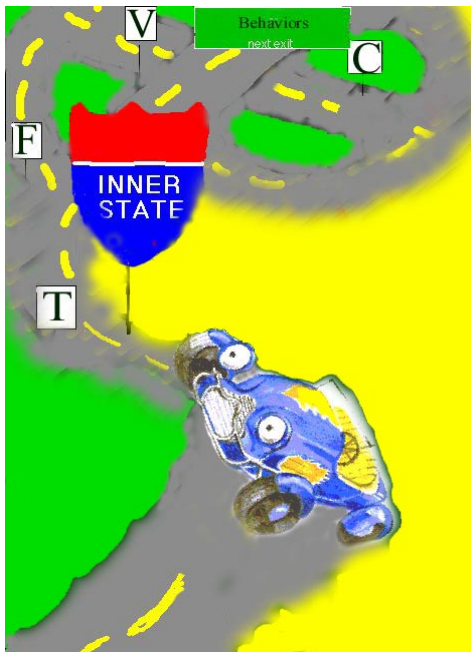


Rod interrupted, "I had to do that, too. It's enough to send a car into road-rage. What you should really worry about is Dr. Beemer. He's the kind of doctor who can give shots."

" Mom!!"

"Don't worry about shots, Carlotta. Rod is teasing you," Mom reassured her.

" Mom, when can I go on the Interstate?" Rod wanted to know.



"I think Dr. Wheeler is more interested in INNER-STATES, isn't she Rod?" Mom smiled.

" What are those, Rod?" Carlotta wanted to know.

"It's hard to explain to little cars."

" Oh, I don't think you even know."

" Do to!"

" Do not!"

If young cars could stomp away, that is just what Carlotta would have done then. Instead she backed up and turned around to find another parking space away from her brother. She was fuming.

"Rodrigo, I want to talk to you alone," said Mrs. Vehicularo.

" I'm sorry I teased you," Rod apologized. "I went to see Dr. Beemer when I was in first grade. I needed medicine a few years. It helped. Now I'm trying without it- "

" Dr. Wheeler said I need to see Dr. Beemer too. I'm not sure what medicine's supposed to do. I'm afraid-it-might-" Carlotta looked miserable.

Rod sighed, "Maybe you really should ask the doctors about medicines and your inner states. It's hard for me to explain everything."

As she promised, Dr. Wheeler met again with Carlotta and her mother. "Carlotta, did you happen to think of any questions since our last visit?"

Carlotta was quiet. She thought, "*Well, I'm not sure how to ask my question, I'm afraid-I-might-*" Just then Carlotta took a risk. She asked in a voice so firm it surprised herself: "Do I have inner-states?"

"Of course you do, inner-states are part of personhood ~ the person-under- your-hood, you could say. Its an important idea, especially when a person's worried that something under her hood isn't working as well as she would like."

" Well what are the inner-states? I'm not sure."

" That's O.K. Let me tell you:

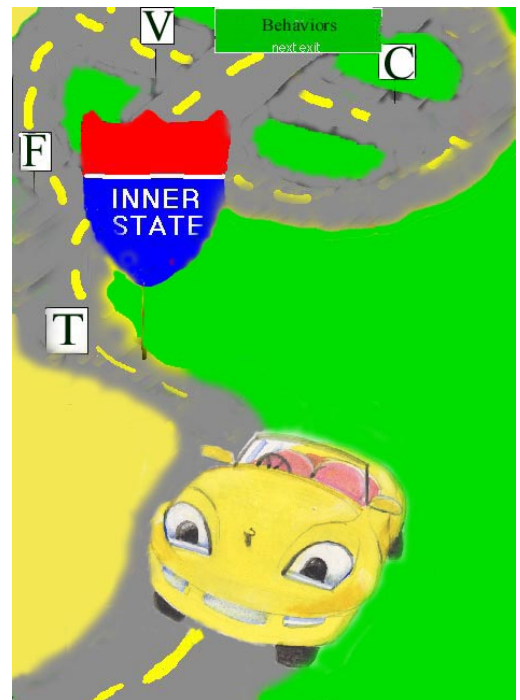
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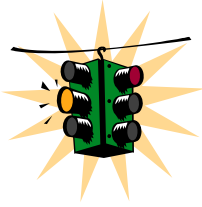
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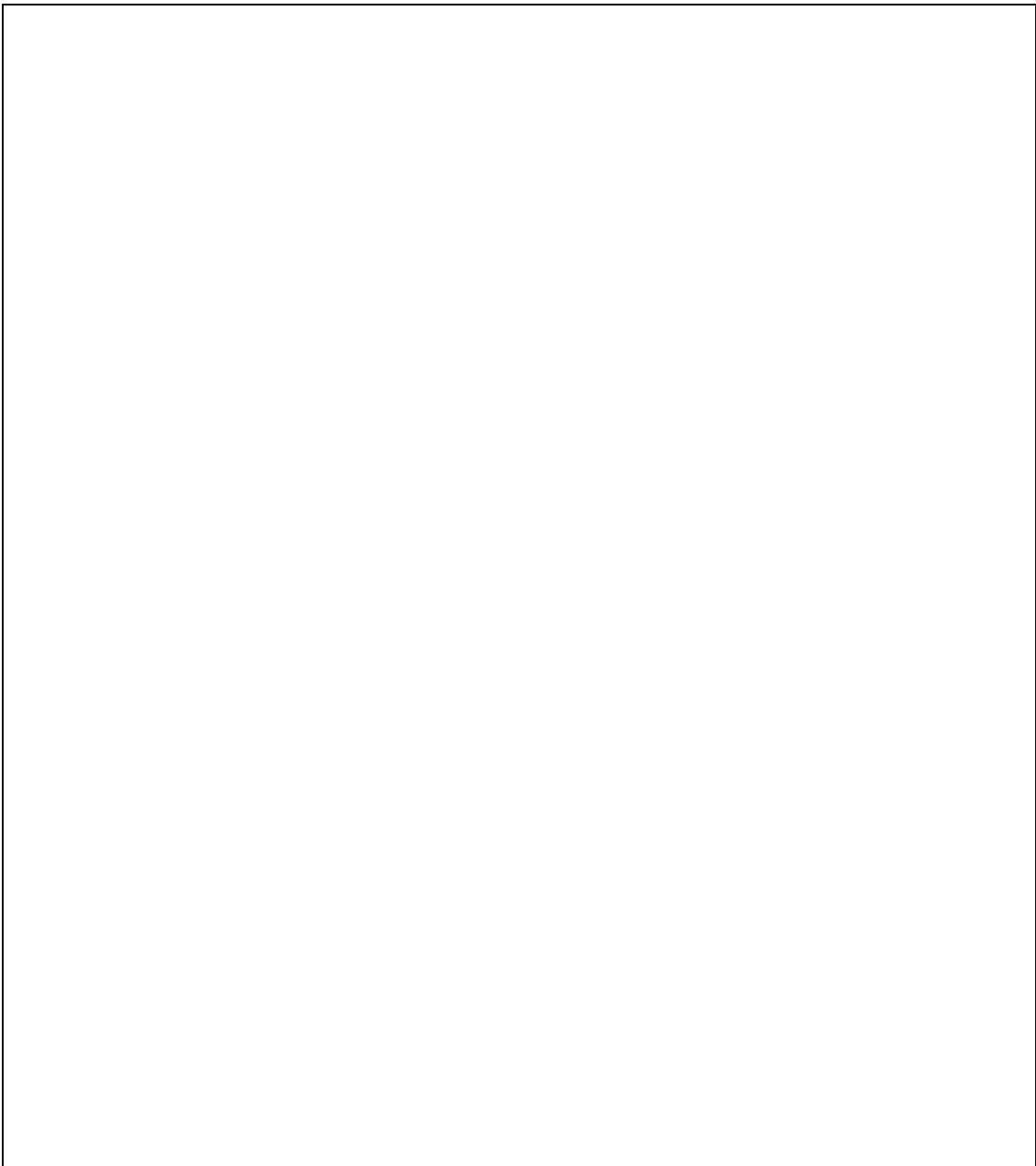




Dear Illustrator:

Is there a part of you that helps you figure out what's right and what's wrong or what's good and what's bad?

Use your imagination and draw a picture of that part of you~
Or draw a picture about right and wrong, good and bad.



Carlotta thought a moment, " When my motor isn't tuned does it hurt my inner-states?"

" Not 'hurt' in the same way a fender-bender can hurt your body," Dr Wheeler replied. "But you do have a condition which makes it hard for your motor to stay tuned to the teacher. It makes it harder for you to stop and think, to see the best direction and to stick to what you've chosen to do. For you it's even harder because you have lots of 'afraid-I-mights' that demand you tune in to them instead."

"Carlotta, you can learn and practice thinking habits that will make you a better problem solver. Your pit crew, Mr. Jalopy at school, your mom at home and me in my office can help. And the special car medicines Dr. Beemer prescribes can help too."

"What would medicines do to my inner states? Would medicines *make* me do things like listen all the time?"

Dr. Wheeler said, " Carlotta, that is such a good question. I am so proud of you for asking it."

Carlotta beamed.

" Hmm. We should try to answer your question together. When you wish a person well, what do you have in mind?"

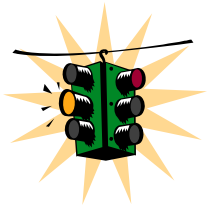
Carlotta thought about what she wished for her brother Rod. She said, "Cool racing stripes and a built-in car phone and ~"

"Ah yes, good things to have. But what about the person-under-the -hood~ what would be good for him?"

Carlotta said, "Hmmm. I guess for his inner-states to be the best they can be."

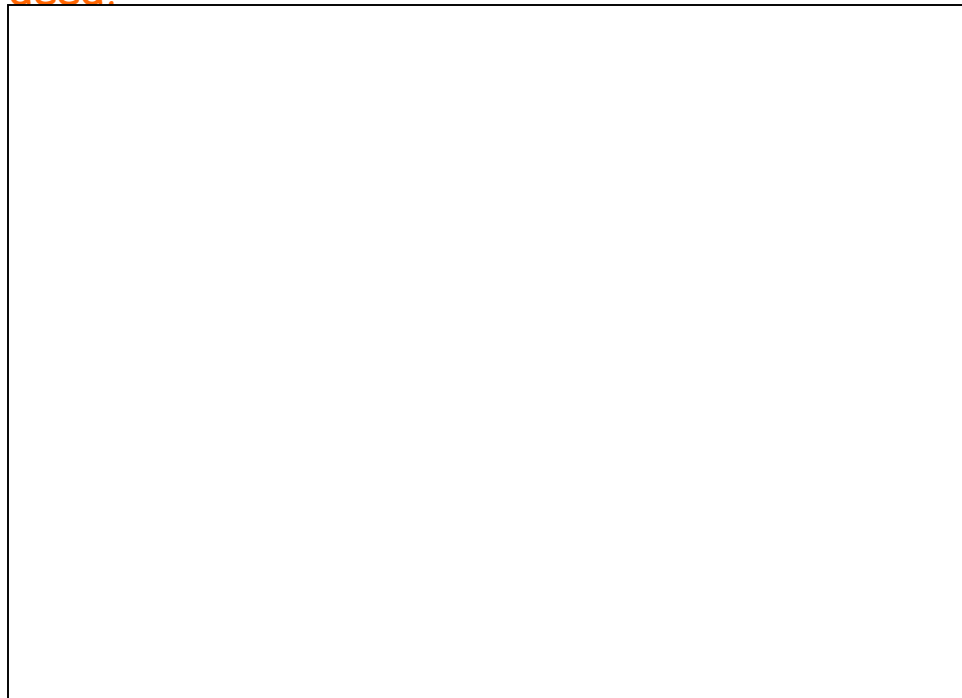
Dr. Wheeler nodded. " Yes. For instance, to be able to stop and think clearly and freely?"

Carlotta nodded, " What about feelings? Shouldn't a person always be happy?"



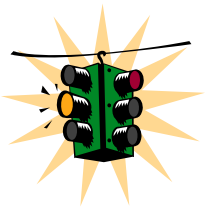
Dear Illustrator:

Draw a Feeling Face that Carlotta might have when she has done something she thinks is right or good. Would it be different if no one knew about her good deed?



Dr. Wheeler shook her head 'No.'

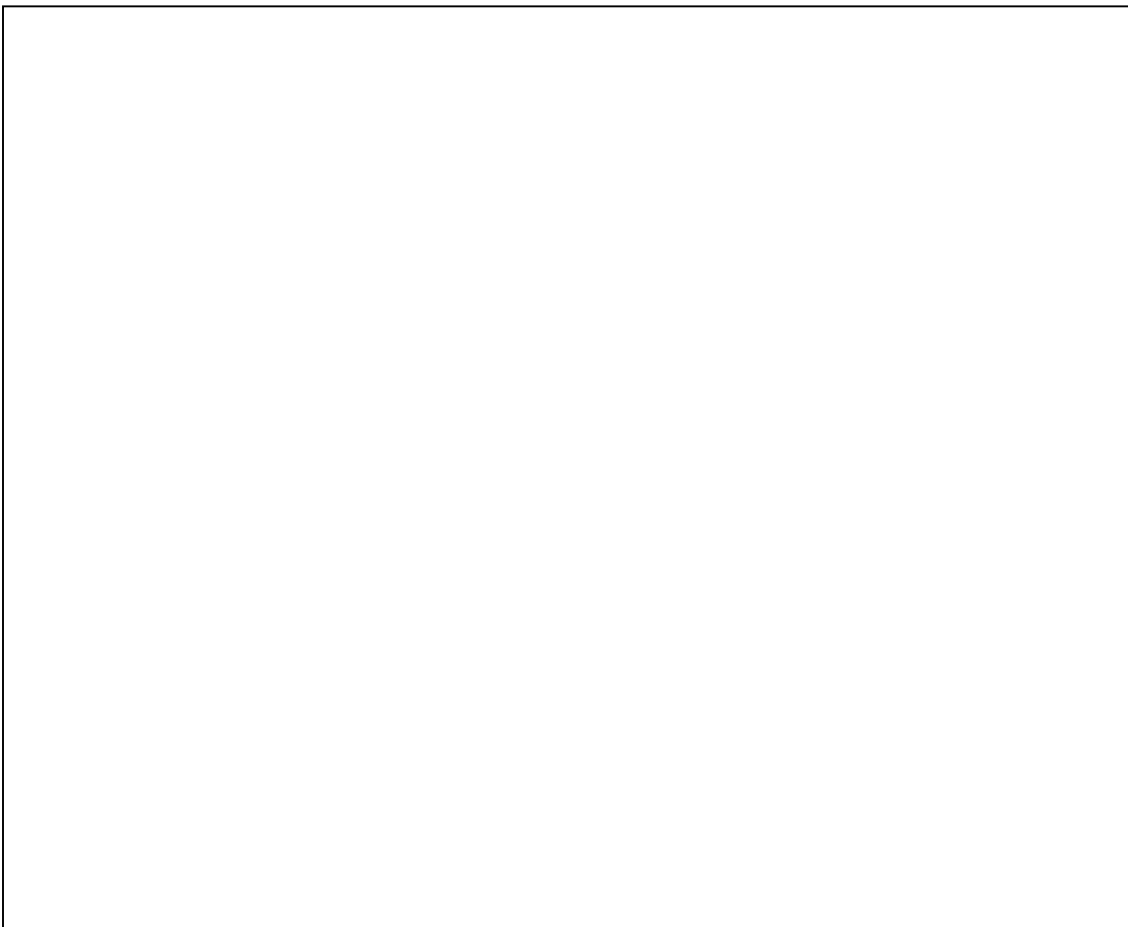
"I do want persons to be happy as much as possible, Carlotta, but more importantly I want them to be able to experience all the feelings a person is meant to have.



Dear Illustrator:

Draw a Feeling Face that Carlotta might have when she thinks she has done something bad or wrong.

Would it be different if no one knew?



Dr Wheeler added, "I also want a person to be able to find out what's important to her. She can't do that very well if her condition won't give her a very good chance. And one more thing ~"

"I think I know already, you want her to be able to choose."

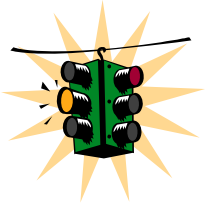
Dr.Wheeler laughed, "Absolutely. Like which direction she should take." Carlotta said, "So medicine could help?"

" It really could. Carlotta, there are special car medicines meant to work on the condition you have so that you are able to think freely, have a fuller range of feelings, be in touch with your values and make your own choices. But that's all. **You** still have to learn *how* to listen, *what* to pay attention to, and decide *where* it's best to go. **You** have to choose the directions you should take."

"*Could* medicine make it harder for her to do those things?" Mom asked. "We saw on TV how a car claimed his medicine gave him road rage when he caused a pile-up on the Interstate."

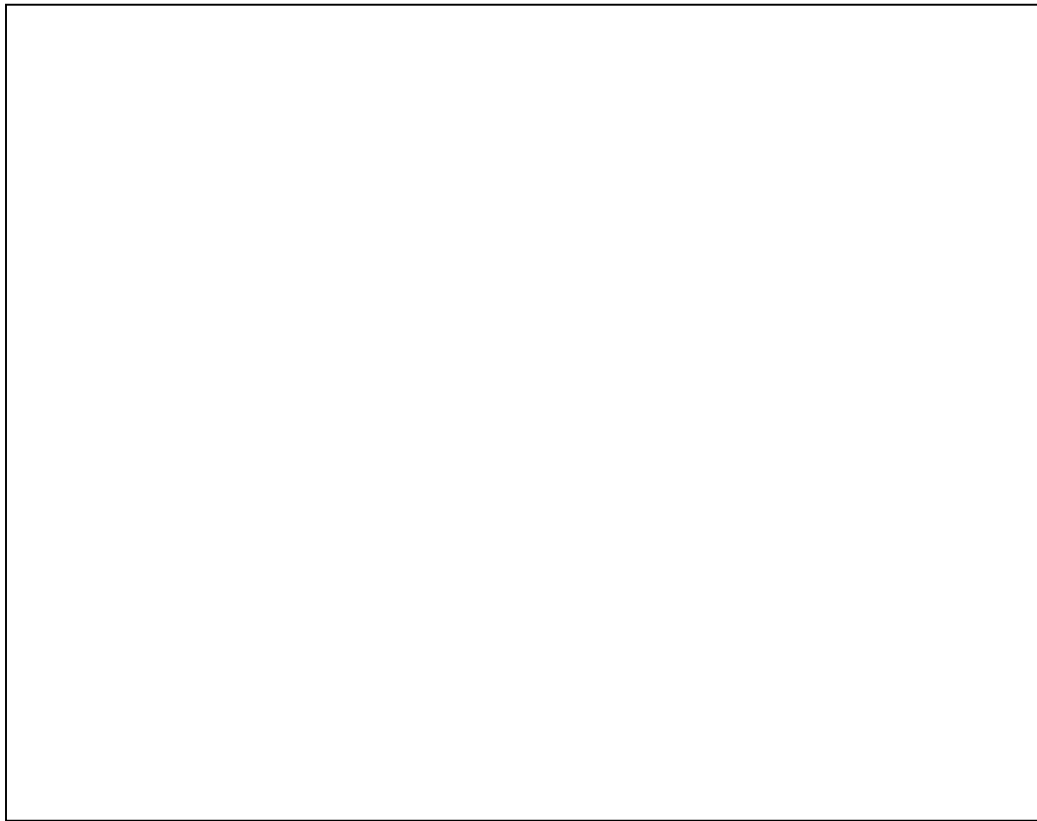
"Carlotta, your mom also asks very good questions. There is some chance for many good medicines to make

some persons feel more crabby or grouchy or even to become confused. They don't make persons into out-of-control robots. Let's draw a story about a little robot."



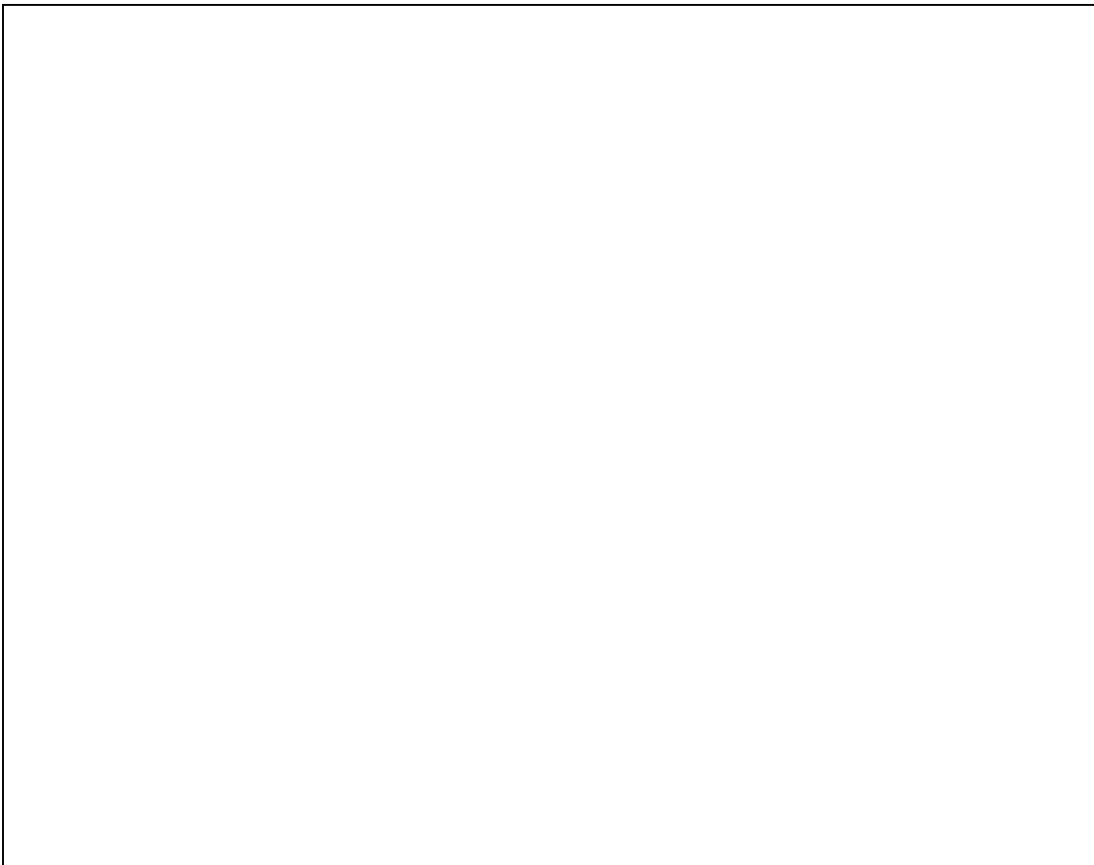
Dear Illustrator:

Draw an 'Out of Control Robot' for Carlotta.



Now draw how the Robot might look (or draw a Feeling Face s/he might have) if s/he has a very strong feeling or powerful urge to do something s/he has learned is not very good or even bad; BUT s/he

- 1) Stops before s/he does anything at all,
- 2) Thinks about how s/he will FEEL later if s/he let's the strong feeling or powerful urge control her or him instead of controlling it, and
- 3) Succeeds in controlling that very strong feeling or powerful urge BECAUSE s/he has learned if s/he doesn't, s/he may not help or even may cause harm to her (or him) self or someone else.



Dr. Wheeler said, "Carlotta your robot drawings are awesome."

Carlotta smiled, " Maybe even before taking medicine, that robot couldn't pay attention very well and maybe couldn't be in control as much as other robots."

Dr. Wheeler smiled too, "Maybe there is a medicine for robots that's supposed to help."

"Things medicines aren't supposed to do are called *side effects*. They often aren't too bad and don't last long. If the side effects make inner-states worse instead of better Dr. Beemer stops or changes the medicine. Of course, everyone in your Pit Crew would like to know right away if you are feeling more crabby, grouchy or confused while taking any medicine."

Dr. Beemer did all the things that Dr. Wheeler had said he would. Carlotta told him what she had learned about her condition. Dr. Beemer was very impressed. Then he asked what treatment had been planned already. He listened and nodded and said "Good ideas." Then Dr. Beemer said, " Carlotta, which car medicine is best for you depends on what *symptoms* we want to treat. Like trouble paying attention and worrying too much. If just one medicine doesn't work, a combination

may be needed. Sometimes it takes a while to find the right combination."

"How will we keep track of the symptoms?" Carlotta asked.

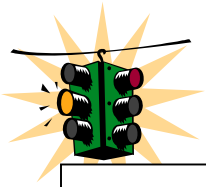
"Yes, how will we know it's working?" Mom gave Carlotta a smile.

"Mrs. Vehicularo, the checklists will be a big help. The symptoms we track come from those. Once in awhile it will be good for you to update them. I'll ask, 'Carlotta, do you notice any changes in your inner states?' and 'Are there things you don't like about your medicine?' I think you will become an important expert on yourself."

It was time to go. Carlotta was glad to have learned so much:

About her personhood,
About her condition that makes it too difficult to pay attention, too difficult to be in control and too easy to worry,
About special car medicines that can help,
About how she can help her Pit Crew look out for side effects if she takes any special car medicine,

About how Mom can call Dr. Beemer for more information,
About how she can tell the 'afraid-I-mights' to be still or feel free to tell all about them to Dr. Wheeler on her next visit.



Dear Illustrator:
The last drawing is up to you.



Note to Therapists, Parents and Teachers:

This is a psycho-educational book for a young child who is being (or expects to be) evaluated to determine what ~if any~ role medication will have in the treatment of her conditions. The first condition suspected is **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Inattentive Type**. ‘Hyperactivity’ is writ small, because that particular feature may not be very prominent in the clinical picture of the child. However other features of ADHD, namely, *inattention* and *impulsiveness* may be quite troublesome. The second condition suspected is an **Anxiety Disorder**, which may be further combined with **Depression**. There are different kinds of anxiety as there are different kinds of depression. When anxiety and /or depression occur along with ADHD, they are said to be *comorbid* conditions.

The presumption upon which this book is based is that the child to whom it is being read has completed (or is in process of completing) a thorough evaluation that will result in positive diagnoses of her suspected conditions. Qualified mental health professionals (such as a psychologist or social worker) should conduct this evaluation in collaboration with qualified prescriptive authorities (such as a child and adolescent psychiatrist, psychiatrist, pediatrician, family physician or nurse practitioner). A child and adolescent psychiatrist is a physician who has received specialized training with respect to ADHD, Anxiety and Depression and other childhood conditions that may also present with inattention and worry. A child and adolescent psychiatrist may be especially helpful in cases when diagnosis and/or treatment are in doubt or appear complicated.

When a parent accepts the recommendation of a prescriptive authority it should be only after the *informed consent* process is well along. What does that mean? An informed consent process doesn’t conclude with a spoken agreement or a signed piece of paper that allows the medication to be prescribed. It is an ongoing process over the course of treatment individualized according to the child and her family. The process may be described as ‘well along’ when the nature of the disorder as well as the relative benefits and risks of proposed treatments have been made reasonably clear. Not always given proper emphasis but another very important part of the process is appreciating the risk of **not** treating the condition. When a legal guardian has been reasonably well informed about a particular treatment and declines the particular treatment in favor of another (or none at all) it is called *informed refusal*. Children should also have information, which becomes the basis of *informed assent*. There are times when parents insist upon pharmacotherapy for their children even in the absence of assent from the child, ~ and sometimes that’s what being a parent demands. Nonetheless there are ways in which a child can be respectfully advised regarding the proposed treatment. This book is intended to help qualified mental health professionals engage the child and her parents in the informed assent process and to allay common worries an already anxious child may have about pharmacotherapy. Use of this book by parent or teacher should be done judiciously, under advisement from a qualified mental health professional engaging the child.

Matthew R. Galvin, M.D.